

31st MEU NEWS

UNIT 35621
FPO AP 96606-5621



December 8, 2008

Commander's Message



The 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit completed the embarked phase of our fall patrol on the 29th of November. Some of the MEU's units remain off island but all should return to Okinawa by Christmas. I am very proud of all our Marines and Sailors for their performance of duty and professionalism during the deployment and for their continuing contributions to the achievement of the MEU's mission. They have made a significant contribution to the national security of the United States by helping to increase the capabilities of our partner nation security forces as well as addressing many of the underlying conditions that give rise to instability in the Pacific theater of operations. Their accomplishments have been recognized by dignitaries such as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of the Philippines, the Deputy Commandant of the Philippine Marine Corps and the Commanding General of U.S. Forces, Korea.

Even though the embarked phase of the fall patrol has ended, the MEU is still required to maintain a very high state of readiness in the event that we are called upon to redeploy in response to a crisis or contingency in the region. Permanent personnel from the Command Element, Aviation Combat Element, and Logistics Combat Element will be authorized to take leave over the holidays but at least 50% of the unit must remain on island and ready to deploy at any time. The Ground Combat Element and those Aviation Combat Element personnel that are here on a 6-month deployment from California will not take leave over the holidays as they will be returning home between 7 and 17 January 2009.

As we enter the holiday season, I would like to thank all spouses and family members for your sacrifices and for your support not only during this deployment but each and every day of the year. I know that our success would not be possible without you. I would especially like to thank all of the Family Readiness Assistants and morale support volunteers who baked cookies and decorated the barracks in preparation for our return. The decorations looked great and all of the barracks residents appreciated the cookies and candy canes. Your efforts made this a special "homecoming" for our Marines and Sailors.

As always, I encourage you to check out the MEU's website at least once a week for the latest updates. It's a good source of news and information. Here's the link:

<http://www.marines.mil/units/marforpac/iimef/31stmeu/Pages/default.aspx>

Semper Fidelis, Col Paul L. Damren

Chaplain's Corner

First, let me say greetings to everyone as I have just reported on board as the 31st MEU Chaplain about 3 weeks ago. I am a Protestant Chaplain, ordained and endorsed with the Evangelical Free Church of America. I've been married to my wife Melda for 23 years as of 30 Nov. We have 3 children that are 20, 18 and 17. Alyssa is our oldest who will graduate soon from cosmetology school in North Carolina. Ashley is our middle child who has been in Japan since August attending Temple University in Tokyo. Corbin is our youngest child and is a junior in high school. I arrived in Okinawa initially as a geographical bachelor but thankfully it's temporary. My wife and son will be coming to Okinawa towards the end of January.

I have been a Navy Chaplain for almost 15 years. This will be my family's fourth overseas tour out of six. We started the journey with back-to-back tours in Italy. Next I served with Marines at Camp Lejeune, Camp Geiger School of Infantry. My next tour was in Yokosuka, Japan at the Chapel of Hope. My last tour was with Marines at Cherry Point with 2D MAW.

I am very excited to serve as the chaplain to the 31st MEU. I'm sure it will include exciting and challenging times for our Marines, Sailors and families. Being a spiritual, ethical and moral advisor to the Command is my number one goal. This is especially true regarding relationships for both those married or single as it pertains to one's relationship with God, family, friends, co-workers and one's self.

In order to spiritually "Beat the Blues" we should include daily or regular encouragement and refreshment from God's Word. I highly recommend Experiencing God Day by Day Daily Devotional by Henry and Richard Blackaby. I am able to get this particular devotional free for military and family members. I currently have a couple of cases on hand and have asked for more copies. I encourage couples/families to use it during the deployments whereby each person is reading the same thing each day. The daily reading can also be viewed online at www.blackabyministry.org.

Surround yourself with positive, encouraging, uplifting input and let God be your focus not your circumstances. Remember the words of warning from the Apostle Paul who said, "Bad company corrupts good character" (1 Cor. 15:33). Instead, practice the words of wisdom from Proverbs 27:17 that tells us, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." May God use each one of us to sharpen one another as a source of encouragement and hope in order that our life may be enriched.

Blessings,
Chaplain Bailey

Smooth Move Workshop

PCSing soon? Here's an excellent opportunity to ensure your move is smooth. Pre-departure and destination information is provided including moving tips, financial concerns, employment opportunities, relocation and travel entitlements, base and community information. This mandatory half-day workshop is for everyone, active duty or DoD Civilian, preparing to transfer within the next few months. Orders are not required and family members are encouraged to attend. Call your nearest PSC to sign up.

**** Childcare Available—****

08 DECEMBER, MONDAY, 0800-1200, FOSTER BLDG. 439

15 DECEMBER, MONDAY, 0800-1200, FOSTER BLDG. 439

SMOOTH MOVE WORKSHOP IS MANDATORY IN ACCORDANCE WITH
MCO P1700.24B, MCO 1320.11E AND MCBJO 1754.1D.

On Base December Events

CAMP COURTNEY FESTIVAL

December 20th-21st

Our friendship festivals are open to everyone island-wide. They feature rides, games, a Kiddie land, prize giveaways, FREE live entertainment and enough cultural and American cuisine to satisfy the heartiest of appetites.

Hansen's Got Talent

December 20, 10 p.m. - midnight

Camp Hansen - The Palms

Got talent? Prove it at The Palms on Camp Hansen on December 20 from 10 p.m. - midnight. We invite all singers, dancers, comedians and any others that want to perform for our judges and audience to win great prizes.

You may just win a 160GB iPod courtesy of Apple and Get Marketing. Registration begins December 15, just stop by or call The Palms to sign up or for more information at 623-4375. In the meantime, start practicing.



TUTOR.COM

MCCS Libraries offers Free Live Online Homework Help. Marines and their families can now get help with school work thanks to a new contract with Tutor.com. Students of any age, from kindergartner to high school senior, as well as adult students, may use the service to connect to an expert tutor for help in math, science, social studies and English.

The Tutor.com network of over 2,200 professional tutors has delivered more than 3.5 million one-to-one tutoring sessions. Each tutor has earned a degree and has completed extensive background checks. Online homework help is available at installation MCCS libraries or 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by visiting www.usmc-mccs.org/library/tutor/

All that is needed is a computer with Internet access. Authorized MCCS patrons who want to use the site from home must contact their installation library for password and login information.

Off-Base Cultural Events

Peaceful Illumination Festival
December 19th – January 3rd 5pm
Itoman Kanko Noen – near Peace Memorial Park
Price: ¥200

Christmas Light Up
December 23-28th 6pm-11pm
South-East Botanical Garden
Price: ¥ 2,000



Scholarships for Military Children

Applications for DeCA's 2009 Scholarships for Military Children Program are available now in commissaries worldwide or online at www.militaryscholar.org. The \$1,500 scholarships are available to unmarried children under the age of 21 (up to 23, if enrolled in school) of military active duty, retired, Guard, and Reserve service members. Applications must be turned in by close of business on Feb. 18, 2009.

VFW MILITARY FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP

This program provides twenty-five \$3,000 scholarships each year to VFW members who are currently serving in uniform or have been discharged within the thirty-six months prior to the December 31 deadline each year. The scholarships will be awarded during the first quarter of the year following the deadline-five for each branch of service-Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard. Questions regarding this program may be directed by email to swilson@vfw.org or by calling 816-756-3390, extension 220.

For information on this and other VFW scholarship programs, visit the VFW National Website at: www.vfw.org

Holiday Meals to Go

Nov 19 – Jan 4

Let MCCS chefs take care of the feast this season! Packages should be booked at least 5 days in advance and paid in full at least 24 hours prior to pick-up. All arrangements must be made with the club where package will be picked up. For more information, contact the participating club nearest you.

Participating Clubs:

[Kinser Surfside](#)-Camp Kinser 637-3137
[Globe & Anchor](#)-Camp Foster 645-3666
[Tengan Castle](#)-Camp Courtney 622-9413

Full Packages:

- 15 lb. Honey Cured Spiral Cut Ham
- 24-26 lb. Fresh Whole Roasted Turkey

Ham & Turkey Combinations
(includes double quantities of package items)

Package Items:

2 qt. Turkey Gravy or Fruit Sauce for Ham, 2 qt. Mashed Potatoes,
2 qt. Traditional Seasoned Bread Stuffing, 2 qt. Candied Yams, 2 qt. Sweet Peas
8 oz. Cranberry Sauce, & Choice of Pumpkin, Pecan or Apple Pie

Classes on Island



Babysitter's Training w/ Infant & Child CPR

Students must be at least 11 years old to take the course and must be 12 years old to baby sit on Marine Corps bases. Class covers child development & safety, diapering, feeding, responding to emergencies, and child & infant CPR and basic First Aid.

For information on possible Babysitting Courses on Camp Courtney please contact Alina Dougherty at 622-8282.

Lay Responder Adult/Child/Infant CPR and First Aid

Fee: \$35.00

20 Dec 0800 - 1600 Foster

20 Dec 0800 - 1600 Kadena

Japanese Translated Adult/Child/Infant CPR and First Aid

Fee \$25.00

13 Dec 0800 - 1600 Foster

Dog First Aid & CPR

Fee: \$25.00

10 Jan 0900-1230 Kadena

**American Red Cross
&
3rd Dental Battalion
Dental Assistant Training Program**



CLASS IS FREE OF CHARGE

Next Class begins March 2009

Applications available at the American Red Cross Office
Building 5674, Camp Foster
February 2009

Call the Red Cross office in January for more information

*For ID card holders over age 18

Call 645-3800 for more information

**Marine Corps Family Team Building
Family Readiness Training Schedule
December 2008**

L.I.N.K.S.

LINKS for Spouses

December 10th

8:30am-2:30pm

Camp Courtney



JSO Cooking Class

December 9th

9am-1pm

JN Open Forum

December 12th

9-11am

Participants must be registered to attend.

For more information contact Marine Corps Family Team Building at **645-3204**



ONLINE RESOURCES

www.marines.mil/units/marforpac/iimef/31stmeu/Pages/default.aspx

This is the official 31st MEU website! Save this link to your "Favorites" on your computer. The website is updated frequently to keep you informed on what your Marine or Sailor is doing at work.

www.mccsokinawa.com

This site offers a ton of information about what is being offered on all Marine Corps bases on the island. The site has links and information for over 80 MCCS programs offered on Okinawa.

www.kadenaservices.com

Provides information about activities and services the Air Force offers to all military members and their families here on Okinawa. It also contains links to Army MWR events on Torii Station and Okuma's online reservation page. Click on PETS to get links to the Vet Clinics and Karing Kennels.

www.japanupdate.com

Provides updates on what's going on Okinawa.

www.okinawahai.com

This website is designed by military spouses for military spouses on Okinawa.

www.mcbbutler.usmc.mil

Provides valuable information on policies and procedures that apply directly to all residents stationed on Marine Corps bases Japan.

www.okinawa.pac.dodea.edu

This site can answer any question you might have pertaining to the on-base school system on Okinawa

www.aafes.com

This site is your resource for all AAFES movie theater schedules

www.okinawayardsales.com

Great site to buy used items and sell your unwanted items.